Dialogues of Architectural Preservation in Modern Vietnam: The 36 Streets Commercial Quarter of Hanoi

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This article examines the significance of dialogues present in the safeguarding of a particular urban site: the "36 Commercial Streets Quarter" in Hanoi, Vietnam. These dialogues expose both the contemporary needs of local inhabitants and the agenda of the government with regard to architectural preservation. Similarly, the dialogues allow for residents of this historical quarter to react to and contest the preservation practices being used on site. This contrast between the views of the government and of local residents reveals how various notions of architectural preservation — in particular, an indigenous sense of preservation and the colonial influence present in the "modern" practice of preserving the past — depict the true nature of Vietnamese culture in its postcolonial state.

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After a protracted period of political unrest and war that followed nearly one hundred years of French colonization and more than one thousand years of Chinese influence, Vietnam has emerged as a nation-state with an incredible melting pot of architectural styles. Across the country, and particularly in its cities, an array of Chinese-like pagodas, temples and palaces, French villas, and Russian-inspired apartment blocks and government buildings can today be found — in addition to local forms of construction. Amidst this diversity, the government is promoting, among other sites, the "36 Streets Commercial Quarter" of Hanoi, or the city's Old Quarter, as an untainted representation of true Vietnamese identity. This is a site that largely survived French colonialism and war, where many of the trades after which its streets were originally named are still practiced (FIG.1).[1]

The 36 Streets Quarter originated in the fifteenth century to service the needs of the adjacent citadel and royal palace. The quarter's commercial streets developed according

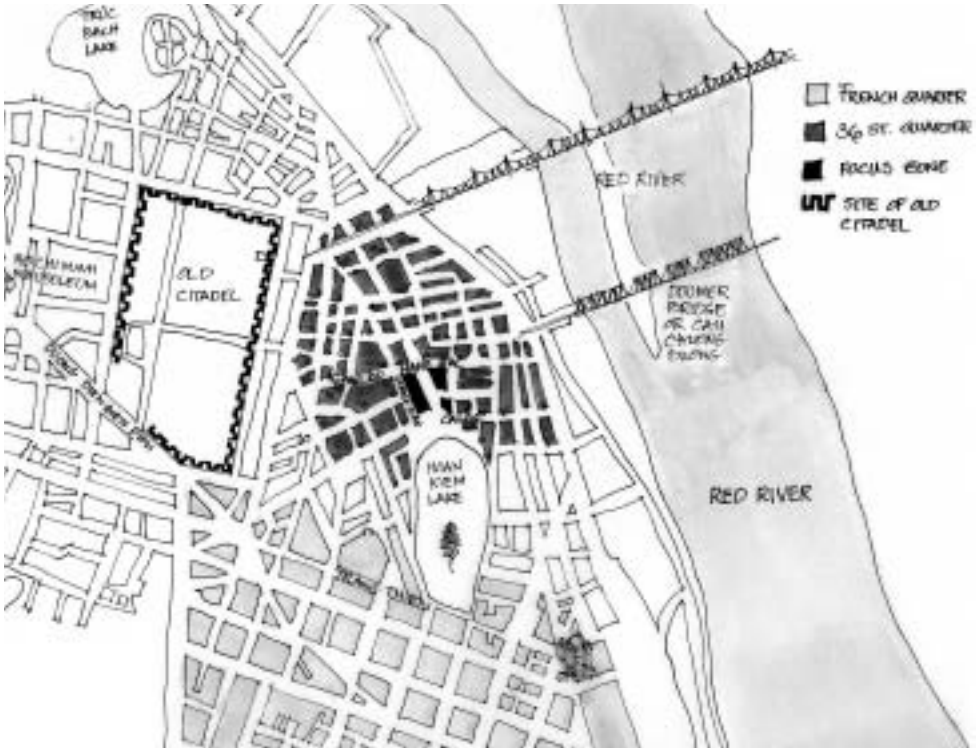

FIGURE 1. *Map of central Hanoi. (Based on Hoang Huu Phe and Yukio Nishimura,* The Historical Environment and Housing Conditions in the "36 Old Streets" Quarter of Hanoi: A Conservation Study*, Bangkok, Division of Human Settlements Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Research Report No.23, 1992, p.xi.)*

to the particular trades that were practiced in villages in the vicinity, and which were imported to the capital city to form what was, in essence, a permanent marketplace **(FIG.2)**. The building type that came to define the district, lining its narrow streets, was the shop house, a work-live space typical of the Southeast Asian region. Over time these structures took on distinctly Vietnamese characteristics, growing deeper and narrower and developing into what are now known as "tube houses" **(FIG.3)**.

FIGURE 2. *Streets in the Old Quarter were named for the particular crafts once practiced there. Here bamboo is stacked in front of a shop on Ladder Street. (Photo by author.)*

Today views surrounding the preservation of the 36 Streets Quarter, particularly those espoused by the government, tend to focus on design solutions reflecting incomplete interpretations and representations of what the area looked like in the fifteenth century, at the time of its birth. By contrast, inhabitants of the quarter, the very people who make it what it is today, have had little say on the preservation of their own neighborhoods — unless their views serve the official agenda.[2] In many ways, the government's idea for the preservation of the area is for a built environment frozen in time, where culture is defined outside the present. Such an idea is representative of a certain current within contemporary preservation practice that promotes the safeguarding of designated moments in history — and worse, portrays these as true representations of the past.[3] In other words, it sacrifices other historical moments to a single, often fictitious vision.

Contrary to such preservation practices, this article argues for an examination of other questions that may help reveal what traditional Vietnamese identity means in Vietnam today. For example, what is the reaction of Hanoians who occupy the 36 Streets Quarter to the safeguarding, upgrading or demolition of their neighborhoods? What tensions exist between the views of residents and of the government? And do residents' desires to preserve their lifestyle in the quarter validate a traditional structure, or favor a total renewal of the area? In other words, should culture in today's postcolonial Vietnam be better conceived as preserving the past, or adapting it to serve contemporary needs.

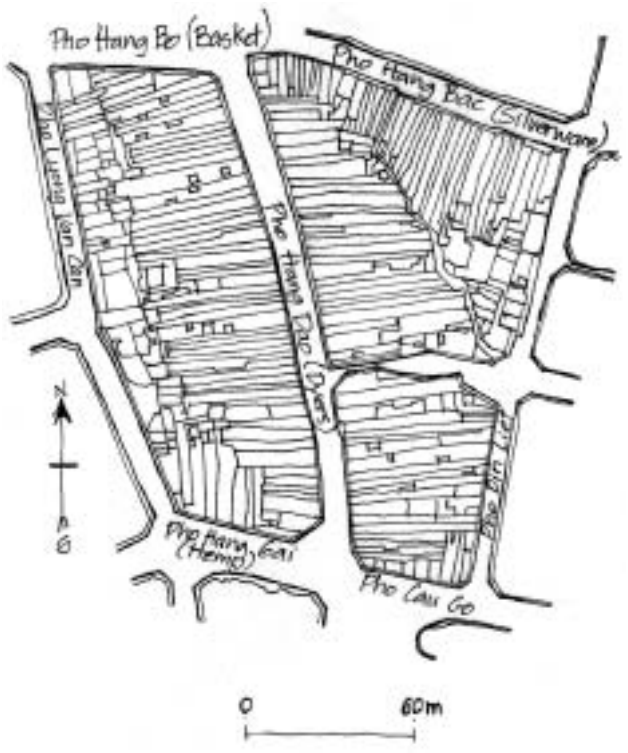

FIGURE 3. *Agglomeration of tube houses on three blocks. (Based on Hoang Huu Phe and Yukio Nishimura,* The Historical Environment and Housing Conditions in the "36 Old Streets" Quarter of Hanoi: A Conservation Study, *Bangkok, Division of Human Settlements Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Research Report No.23, 1992, p.20.)*

The contrast between official concerns and the concerns of local inhabitants illustrates how ideological and historical factors are at play in attempts to define a postcolonial identity in Hanoi. The conflict over the preservation, modernization or demolition of the 36 Streets Quarter also indicates how the definition of culture and its preservation through built form is a constantly evolving process. I begin with a brief history and physical description of the area.

THE 36 STREETS QUARTER

An official capital of one sort or another has existed in Hanoi for more than one thousand years. However, the city only began to develop at an accelerated pace in the fifteenth century, when the commercial quarter of the 36 Streets grew in order to cater to the needs of the adjacent citadel, or royal encampment. At that time the streets of the area were modeled after the social organization of traditional villages, where single trades were often practiced.

Each of the streets in the quarter is today comprised of rows of shop houses, known as "tube houses" **(FIG.4)**.[4] Aside from these ubiquitous live-work structures, pagodas, temples, and communal houses are also scattered around the quarter **(FIG.5)**.[5] The elongated tube-house form was developed in response to the practice of seventeenth-century imperial administrators to tax the width of shop fronts. For merchants to continue to attract customers without paying a lot in taxes, their storefronts by necessity became very narrow **(FIGS.6,7)**. Such rules also meant that as a family grew, its house would deepen, since houses could not grow taller, "supposedly to prevent any attempt on the life of the emperor as he was carried around in a palanquin."[6]

FIGURE 4. *Street scene in the 36 Streets Quarter, showing typical, narrow tube house facades. (Photo courtesy of Mui Ho.)*

During the period of French colonization, Hanoi was the French capital in Southeast Asia, and the city came to be marked by the French architectural styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the 36 Streets Quarter was little changed by the French. Although its

FIGURE 5. *Temple on Fan Street in the 36 Streets Quarter. (Photo by author.)*

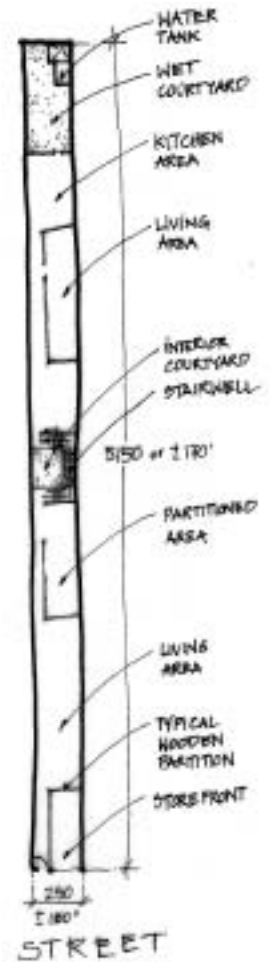

FIGURE 6. (LEFT) *Plan of a typical tube house. (Based on Hoang Huu Phe and Yukio Nishimura,* The Historical Environment and Housing Conditions in the "36 Old Streets" Quarter of Hanoi: A Conservation Study, *Bangkok, Division of Human Settlements Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Research Report No.23, 1992, p.34.)*

FIGURE 7 (RIGHT). *Interior corridor of a tube house. (Photo courtesy of Mui Ho.)*

streets were widened and certain colonial architectural features were inserted, the French, for practical reasons, left it largely intact. Their administration in Hanoi needed domestic help as well as easy access to local facilities and everyday services, and the preservation by neglect of the quarter may have been a practical consideration.[7]

Today, although its shop houses mostly date to the late nineteenth century, the quarter is the only area of Hanoi that resembles in plan the older, precolonial city. It has, therefore, a significant historical and cultural value, which has been recognized by the Vietnamese government. As Vietnam slowly enters a competitive market economy in a world where nation-states strive to define themselves as distinctive, officials want to use the 36 Streets Quarter to promote national identity on the world stage.

ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION IN VIETNAM

Over the past sixteen years, Vietnam has become increasingly active, if cautiously so, in the world economy — a move punctuated by its joining the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995. During this time, Vietnam has made a major effort to define itself as an autonomous entity among its immediate neighbors, negating at the same time the all-encompassing "Asian Values" paradigm that emerged as a reaction to the homogenizing effects of the West in Asia. Vietnam's admittance to ASEAN, as the group's seventh member, marked a paradigm shift of sorts in the region. The country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Manh Cam, described this as a "qualitative change in the condition of our region 50 years after the end of World War II . . . an eloquent testimony to the ever-growing trends of *regionalization* and globalization in the increasingly interdependent world [my emphasis]."[8]

As part of this effort at reintegration, the Vietnamese government has placed strong emphasis on defining a Vietnamese cultural identity, particularly in the nation's capital city, Hanoi. The nature of this state-defined effort was reflected in a 1994 article on Hanoi in the government-oriented *Vietnam Investment Review (VIR)*. According to that article, "Local inhabitants strictly follow principles of respect, dignity, trust and honor — a far cry from living standards usually associated with a burgeoning metropolis in Southeast Asia."[9] Such representations seek to set Vietnam apart from neighboring countries, as a highly authentic and rooted culture with a thousand-year-old capital containing still-vibrant quarters dating to the city's foundation. At the same time, such statements also seem to express Vietnam's desire to be perceived as a fully fledged modern nation, one drawing sustenance from a precolonial ideology.

Such repositioning of historical awareness is important in terms of the nation's architectural preservation discourse. The notion of architectural preservation clearly predated the arrival of the French in Vietnam, as can be seen by precolonial imperial codes which contained a number of references to the preservation of old buildings. However, such references did not carry the modern aspect that related architectural preservation to historical consciousness.[10] For example, the Annamite Code had 21 different groups of laws. Articles that can be interpreted as guidelines for the preservation of buildings can be found in sections referring to civil law, under the subtitle "rice-fields and habitations"; on ritual law, under the subtitle "sacrifices and etiquette"; and on construction law.[11] But the relative scarcity of articles relating directly to architectural preservation suggests that this imperative was aimed not at defining cultural difference between states (since such a concept did not exist), but at establishing an ideology based on respect for social rank.

In general, precolonial building preservation guidelines embodied concern that the common man should take care of certain forms within the built environment to show respect toward things, animals, people, the sovereign, and the gods that were considered superior. Laws were therefore enforced to maintain buildings, repair them, and avoid their destruction. And in such matters, the appropriate degree of care (or choice of ornamentation) depended on one's rank in society as set down in article 157 of the Annamite Code: "*. . . suivant le degré d'élévation ou d'inferiorité, de noblesse ou d'humilité de la condition de chacun* [according to the degree of elevation or inferiority, nobility or humility of everyone's condition]. . . ."[12]

Broadly speaking, "conservation" efforts were thus concerned with maintaining respect for the imperial family, religion, and morals. Cultural inheritance was automatic in Vietnamese feudal society. In every case, whatever one owned would be passed on to the next generation. Furthermore, the nature of one's inheritance was protected by a very detailed ordinance relating the materials, colors and shapes that could be used for each object (and how many of them one could own) to one's rank.[13] Such a definition of heritage was never meant to transmit specific representations of built heritage to future generations, as in contemporary Western societies. Indeed, there is evidence that such a transnational historical consciousness only came into being during the modern era, when the project of nation-building created a need to instruct all nationals in a common history and culture.

Today, however, as it attempts to single itself out through cultural representation and attract foreign capital, the Vietnamese nation has embraced the modern concept of architectural preservation in combination with these older precolonial ideas. And to link modernity to historical ideology, it has focused its promotional efforts on such areas as the 36 Streets Quarter, which may be depicted as representative of Vietnamese identity through history. This intent was evident in an October 2000 issue of *VIR*, which noted, "Even today, the Old Quarter has changed little in terms of design or atmosphere, a unique facet for a city that surely must be a strong contender for the title of 'oldest capital city in the world.'"[14] Such statements also indicate how the Vietnamese government is following the same path as French colonizers, who wished to demonstrate the presence of traditional structures in a modernizing city.

This state position toward heritage preservation would also seem to assume a heritage narrative that fixes the architectural representation of tradition in one historical moment. According to the same October 2000 *VIR* article, "day-to-day life in the Old Quarter for many of its residents has not changed since the first foundations were laid in the fifteenth century."[15] This statement ignores the reality that all that remains of the fifteenth-century quarter is its pattern of clogged narrow streets. Meanwhile, actual commercial and daily activities have changed to cater to visitors and residents, no longer to the citadel.

In many ways, the state appears to want to treat the district as a living museum of Vietnamese traditional urban life, based on the colonial zoning plans of the Chinese and the French, and as bathed in an aura of cultural diversity. About Hanoi, the October 2000 *VIR* noted, "nowhere is the city's cultural diversity more apparent than [in the 36 streets]."[16] Thus, the authorities are attempting to use their preservation agenda to recover symbolic representations of tradition needed to sell the country abroad as an autonomous modern state. Within this project, the emphasis on cultural diversity — the reflection of an already historically globalized city — is important, because it defines the country as a modern, globalized place, whose precolonial past has already demonstrated its ability to accommodate multiple cultural backgrounds.

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES

In an effort to solidify its political and ideological agenda, the government has taken steps toward preserving the

built heritage of the 36 Streets Quarter and other areas. Among other things, these actions reveal how globally defined concepts become intertwined in local affairs. In particular, one can see how international preservation guidelines have become important to areas such as the Old Quarter, where they have been instrumental in elaborating local urban planning laws and building codes.[17]

The use, and sometimes adoption by the Vietnamese government of these guidelines did not come about overnight. Such guidelines are actually rooted in nineteenth-century European philosophies regarding notions of historical and cultural preservation.[18] But they were exported to the colonies and institutionalized in such schools as the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), whose head office was in Hanoi. This colonial legacy is evident in many ways in the formulation of Vietnamese preservation strategies today.

Among other things, these imported preservation philosophies treated buildings as single specific cases. During the colonial period they were applied across Indochina in restorations such as the Single Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature, and in independent Vietnam they surfaced in restorations of Hanoi's Opera House, Metropole Hotel, and National History Museum.

After decades of war, economic dearth pushed Vietnam to preserve other parts of Hanoi, following yet again principles inherited from the colonial era. For example, a 1992 study by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) suggested that, due to lack of money, many of the older buildings that are today being considered for preservation were converted to residential use as a solution to Hanoi's housing shortage.[19]

Such a campaign is comparable to that which also took place in post-World War II Europe, which also needed to reconstruct its cities. Part of Europe's strategy then was to relocate surviving populations into older buildings that were still standing. This concept was explicit in the work of Cesare Brandi, which was subsequently translated into the 1964 Venice Charter. This charter was also the direct outcome of the evolution of European architectural preservation principles, most of which had already been exported to the colonies.

As mentioned above, many European colonial powers established institutions to safeguard the monuments of other cultures, setting up a precedent of universalism for future theories of preservation. Their efforts obviously varied from nation to nation. However, in the French case, Paul Rabinow has shown how as society was being freed from previous historical and natural constraints, certain norms (social functioning) and forms (cultural objects) were elevated to universal status to serve as model elements of a productive social order.[20]

In addition to the direct influence of colonial architectural preservation principles (whose formalization in Vietnam can be traced to at least 1964[21]), in 1987 Vietnam joined the UNESCO Convention, based on the Venice Charter, to protect monuments worldwide. Among other things, this has made Vietnam eligible to receive funding from foreign countries for conservation projects. With this funding, it has been possible to elaborate a body of urban planning laws and codes. Indeed, regulations such as those for the protection of Hoan Kiem Lake, adjoining the 36 Streets, were implemented in 1997, and today they assure that big international projects cannot substantially modify this landscape.[22] This example is among the many that still remain to be made in order to reach an official protection management plan backed by laws and codes proper to Vietnam.

Other government involvement can be seen in invitations to foreign governments and nongovernmental organizations, particularly those from France, Japan and Australia, for planning and preservation assistance. Such foreign organizations have provided financial aid and worked with the Ministry of Construction in surveying, planning and registering areas like the 36 Streets Quarter, as well as training local inhabitants and architects in methods of construction and preservation. The 1992 AIT study of the 36 Streets Quarter also pointed out that the introduction of modern services like running water, sewerage, and electricity was also subsidized by the City Land and Housing Department.[23]

All these efforts to define a unique Vietnamese identity through architectural preservation have resulted from national and international concerns over heritage. But they also reflect ideologies that are particular to Vietnam, since they include precolonial and colonial historical impacts in their postcolonial treatment of heritage. I am not endorsing the Vietnamese government's position here, but merely pointing out its capacity to reveal the relevance of the global for the local. In fact, the global and the local may be seen as working off each other and in parallel, rather than as opposites. Just as Manuel Castells and Michel Laguerre have tried to deconstruct this supposedly oppositional relationship elsewhere, the preservation debate in Vietnam shows how the two are complementary and necessary to each other.[24]

As complements, the two forces have also allowed local and national history to reveal itself as essential to the understanding of architectural preservation in Vietnam. Yet even when such policies can have a good effect through the preservation of a site, they should not be the only ones taken into account.

LOCAL POSITIONS ON THE 36 STREETS QUARTER

While today's activities and life-styles in the 36 Streets Quarter may resemble those of the fifteenth century, one must be careful not to mistake them for an exact replica. In this regard, it is important to understand how the inhabitants' representation of the area differs from that which the state is actively trying to promote. The government is selling an object of the past that belongs to an invented or frozen tradition.[25] But residents of the quarter live in the present, dealing with the many constraints and advantages of this old area.

Rabinow has pointed out that an "anti-nostalgic attitude toward the modern world" already existed during the nineteenth century.[26] Indeed, some writers of that time, including Charles Baudelaire, were already insisting there was "no right to despise the present."[27] As Janet Abu-Lughod has said, "tradition can only be defined from where we stand."[28] In other words, a *present* approach to architectural preservation should take into account the tensions and exchanges between an existing static built heritage and the present social life of the people, their desires and problems. From this point of view, the recognition of a traditional way of life associated with a building should concentrate on a process rather than the preservation of a fixed entity. According to Abu-Lughod, such a process can be called "traditioning," or the "creative recycling of existing forms, rather than either its rigid adherence to old ones or its invention of totally new ones."[29]

Today, Hanoi's Old Quarter reflects various layers of architectural style, reflecting Chinese, French, vernacular and contemporary Vietnamese influences. All of these must be considered when dealing with preservation issues. Brandi and Giovannoni's theories have long promoted the view that all the various historical moments that create or modify cultural heritage must be taken into account in a preservation project. Furthermore, all the actors that "influence space by acting on the built environment" and "crystallize time in it" should also have a say in preservation decisions, Castells has written.[30]

As explained earlier, the 36 Streets Quarter is made up of narrow streets delineated by long tube-like shop houses, pagodas, temples and communal houses; all would seem to be worthy of some attention architecturally. Yet, interviews with inhabitants reveal different motivations than those of the government when it comes to the preservation of these houses and other cultural elements. In particular, their interest seems to be based more on a desire to preserve their life-styles and businesses than any modern sense of heritage awareness.[31]

Two of the residents' main motivations for wanting to remain in the area would appear to be economic and speculative.[32] Ever since the 36 Streets Quarter began to be promoted abroad as representative of the city's true identity, tourism has become a major revenue source for inhabitants of the district's quaint shop houses. In 1992 the price of land per square meter also jumped from US$240 to over $700. As Templer has written, "the economic gains of rebuilding higher and bigger were irresistible."[33] However, these same constructions are what Ngo Quang Nam has referred to as illegal "overnight renovations."[34]

Vietnam has a very rigid hierarchy stemming from its communist and socialist years. With economic liberalization, this hierarchy has lost much of its logic, and at the same time individual entrepreneurship within the law has proven very difficult. As a result, those seeking financial profit often consider it faster to skip the formalities of an outmoded bureaucratic system.

However, there are other reasons for wanting to stay in the area that are not based on economic gain. These include wanting to avoid time-consuming transportation between home and work and a desire, particularly among older residents, to maintain present community habits and patterns of religious worship. An article published on the Web in 2000 cited these same concerns when it claimed, "[The 36 Streets inhabitants] want to be near the old lake, the market, near my old neighbors and friends."[35]

However, remaining in the quarter often means dealing with such conditions within existing buildings as leaking roofs, flooded floors during the monsoon season, and old plumbing systems. In addition, each shop house has historically accommodated up to one hundred people, making the quarter the most densely populated area of Hanoi.[36] Efforts by local inhabitants to preserve the neighborhood's houses already include refurbishment and restoration of some existing structures, as well as some demolition to make space for new buildings with modern infrastructures.[37] However, those residents who seem most inclined to pursue such individual renovation appear to be owners, rather than renters of state-owned property.[38]

As confirmation of this trend, the AIT study showed that members of families who had lived in the 36 Streets Quarter for generations were most aware of the architectural heritage there. The study indicated that the people who were merely employed in the quarter or who were renters were not as aware of this heritage.[39] Renters would eventually move back to their original villages, limiting their sense of heritage and cultural ties to the 36 Streets Quarter. Such a tendency would appear to correlate with the Vietnamese tradition of returning to one's place of birth at the end of one's life.[40]

According to the AIT study, 67 percent of the inhabitants of the 36 Streets Quarter were satisfied with their housing conditions. However, these same people cited some elements they felt were lacking in their homes, particularly running water and adequate kitchens. Many stated that they intended to make these improvements themselves, reflecting the fact that the area is not a slum, but actually houses a considerable middle class.[41]

In parallel with the above trends, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the old trades of the quarter are becoming obsolete or too expensive to run. Already, a younger generation has begun to move out in search of other sources of income. One recent article on the future of the Old Quarter's inhabitants predicted that "as the economy improves, an affluent second generation will move out in search of better living standards." Quoting workers in a project run by the Australian agency AusAID, the article projected that in the next ten years, "young families will move west to new housing projects where they will have space for a car."[42]

Nevertheless, other residents have found alternate crafts to practice in the area, or they have begun new commercial enterprises there. And for members of other families who

have resided in the quarter for generations, it will continue to be important to remain near the district's temples, pagodas and communal houses. The AIT study found these sites continued to be visited mainly for worship, and only secondarily for sightseeing.[43] For such people, the preservation of the area would seem to embody less the restoration of a glorious architectural past (what the government is trying to promote), but rather the continuance of everyday customs and traditions.

There is thus a sharp divergence over identity behind differences of view between the agenda of the government and the concerns of people who live in the 36 Streets Quarter. For most residents, the area is of historical (in a traditional family sense), practical, and commercial importance. There is little sense it represents an architectural artifact in the static cultural sense imagined by the state. However, one sense of identity inevitably influences the other, and this interconnectedness makes Vietnamese identity appear to be of one kind in sites like the 36 Streets Quarter.

In truth, there is a certain awareness of the architectural value of their shop houses in the minds of local inhabitants. However, the survival of a stable business appears to be of higher priority to them.[44] The inhabitants are therefore willing to preserve the buildings, but only if practical concerns of comfort, wealth, and easy access to neighborhood facilities are addressed. From this perspective, a true reason for the preservation of this area would seem to lie in the modern identity of its inhabitants, and their concerns for comfort and space, rather than in the modern national identity the government is trying to promote, which would seem to reflect an idealized traditional life-style that does not exist, and has probably never existed in the way depicted.

Either way, the area has the potential to be preserved. But to reflect the needs of residents, architectural preservation may also have to include upgrading. And when an existing shop house has become too dilapidated, it may need to perish, to be replaced by a newer version. Abu-Lughod, as cited above, referred to this process as the "creative recycling of existing forms." Thus, with materially realizable concerns for structural security and proper infrastructure, the newer "wedding cake"-like shop houses of the 36 Streets Quarter can be thought of as modern versions of cultural heritage (FIG. 8).

When it comes to defining the identity of a community, and determining whom that identity primarily serves, the 36 Streets Quarter is clearly "contested space."[45] Such differences in opinion however clearly illustrate the importance of local, national and international concerns over the understanding of cultural heritage. All three levels of concern must be taken into account if guidelines for the preservation of cultural heritage are to be effective. As preservation discourses surrounding the 36 Streets Quarter show, there are often characteristics of culture and tradition that are less visible than the facades of buildings. People's interactions and social organization are very much part of the existing built environment, and will continue to be so.

FIGURE 8. *Newer versions of tube houses are generally taller than their historical antecedents. (Photo courtesy of Mui Ho.)*

This quarter, its history and the people involved in its fate, reveal that a Hanoian "sense of place" and a local identity rooted in tradition and history are qualities found in sites where local identity is being contested. Whether the definition of identity through architectural preservation responds to a political agenda followed by the state or to private economic interest pursued by an individual owner, all steps taken toward architectural preservation pertain to the survival of local traditions. The problem resides in the choice of tradition to be revived or depicted, and whether one decides to acknowledge the multifaceted aspect of tradition and culture, mirrored by different people.

Aside from property developers who claim that heritage preservation hinders investment or a state economy that is mainly concerned with poverty alleviation and social integration, local communities and their people often have extremely relevant concerns — albeit sometimes injected with national ideas — that may reveal important questions surrounding preservation projects.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to unravel some of the complexities surrounding architectural preservation in Vietnam today. Many different factors must be taken into account in understanding what architectural preservation means there today. These include how the present government is depicting its country's cultural heritage to its neighbors and the world; how this depiction has been influenced by traces of architectural preservation methods and practices from the colonial era that are now part of Vietnamese culture; and how the people express their concerns, live their daily lives, and fight for their own sense of tradition and place, sometimes rooted in precolonial ideologies. Only when all these factors are considered can the full meaning of cultural heritage emerge in Vietnam and true reasons for an architectural preservation program be understood.

When seeking to define culture, identity and urbanism in a historical context, it is important to understand how "societies are constructed in relation to one another," Nezar AlSayyad has written.[46] Therefore, the importance of local concerns and ideologies, neighboring countries, and even invading powers can help explain why and how to preserve a building.

It can be extremely reductionist to look only at buildings as particular cases of a country's cultural heritage. Likewise, by referring only to existing international guidelines when evaluating a program to safeguard a country's built heritage, one may deny a people's right to decide on the fate of their culture according to factors that may not be visible in the built form alone.

Vis-à-vis the world, only part of the reason for making preservation sustainable in Vietnam is economic gain. Locally, this case study of Hanoi's 36 Streets Quarter has shown that many individuals feel that their identity and culture derive from different traditions and roots. When the government of Vietnam is engaged in a process that redefines history, citizens may react to the legitimacy of this history. Hence, there is an increasing level of complexity with regard to heritage that the government is not fully capable of translating in its architectural preservation choices.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. For a brief description of the official image of culture defined by the Vietnamese government, see any recent publication by the Vietnam Tourism Authority or report in the local press.
2. In 1994, the year during which Hanoi's heritage was to be promoted by UNESCO, an article in the *Vietnam Investment Review* (hereafter *VIR*) assured that both heritage and modernity would be taken into account. See "Gold-old, Bad-old Hanoi," *VIR* (November 14–20, 1994).
3. On the problems of looking for tradition in a precolonial era and fixing it at a certain time, see N. AlSayyad, "Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism: Manufacturing Heritage, Consuming Tradition," in AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp.7–8.
4. M. Askew and W.S. Logan, eds., *Cultural Identity and Urban Change in Southeast Asia: Interpretive Essays* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1994), p.50. According to Askew and Logan, tube houses may now range in street-frontage width from six to fifteen feet, and can reach a depth of 300 feet.
5. For a detailed description of the area, see the monograph by F. Decoster and D. Klouche, *Portrait de Ville: Hanoi* (Paris: Institut Français d'Architecture, 1997), pp.14–19.
6. R. Templer *Shadows and Wind: A View of Modern Vietnam* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p.208.
7. For more detail about this form of domestic necessity, see E.M. Hébrard, "L'Urbanisme aux Colonies et dans les Pays Tropicaux," *L'Urbanisme en Indochine*, Vol.1 (1932), p.279: ". . . all European groupings need an indigenous population to live; either to enjoy an indispensable domesticity, or for commerce. . . ." Translation from the French by Alexandra Sauvegrain.
8. ASEAN Web page: <http://asean.com> History and Evolution of ASEAN. The word "regionalization" refers here to the Southeast Asian region, not to the whole of Asia as reflected in the "Asian values" paradigm.
9. "Growing Old Gracefully," *Vietnam Investment Review (VIR)*, No.469 (October 9–15, 2000).
10. Indeed today, the term preservation relates to the sustaining of a cultural heritage, as in its conservation and restoration. In Bernard Fielden's words, conservation "is an action to prevent decay," that must happen with a "minimum effective action" (as cited in S. Roaf, "Book Reviews," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.11 No.1 (Fall 1999), pp.58–61). This conservation process, therefore, comes prior to restoration, which must be preferably reversible. As for the term restoration, Jukka Jokilehto has defined it as "the continuation of the [conservation] process, when conservation treatment is thought to be insufficient, to the extent of reinstating an object, without falsification, to a condition in which it can be exhibited." See Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford and Woburn, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, Linacre House, 1999), p.9.
11. P.L.F. Philastre, *Le Code Annamite* (Paris: Ernest Leroux Editeur, 1909), pp.15–16.
12. Ibid., p.651. Translation from the French by Alexandra Sauvegrain.
13. As an example, decree V. of article 156 of the Annamite code, stipulated the number of umbrellas and parasols a person could possess according to rank, based on such variables as size, color, ornamental details, materials, and number of ribs. See Philastre, *Le Code Annamite*, p.658.

14. "Growing Old Gracefully," *VIR*, No.469 (October 9–15, 2000).
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. UNESCO, as an agent of the World heritage, has come up with a set of preservation guidelines that allow member countries to appeal to other member states for funding with regard to their own heritage, following preservation principles established by UNESCO and its partner organizations.
18. Such theories as that of Viollet-Le-Duc, George Gilbert Scott, and (in the twentieth century) Giovannoni and Brandi were critical in the elaboration of preservation philosophies and are the remote fathers of the 1972 UNESCO Convention.
19. H.P. Hoang and Y. Nishimura, *The Historical Environment and Housing Conditions in the "36 Old Streets" Quarter of Hanoi: A Conservation Study* (Bangkok: Division of Human Settlements Development, Asian Institute of Technology, Research Report No.23, 1992), p.1.
20. P. Rabinow, *French Modern* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp.11–13.
21. Tran Hung, a professor of architecture at the University of Hanoi, has written that conservation regulations were first promulgated in Vietnam in 1964. They were followed in 1984 by the "Decree on the Preservation and Protection of Historical and Cultural Vestiges and Famous Sites and Sights." See Tran Hung, *La Conservation du patrimoine urbain à Hanoi* (Montreal: ICAHM, Atelier A, 1994), p.109.
22. W.S. Logan, "Heritage Planning in Post Doi Moi Hanoi: The National and International Contributions," in *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol.61 No.3 (Summer 1995), p.336.
23. Hoang and Nishimura, *"36 Old Streets" Quarter*, p.42.
24. On the repositioning of the global and the local, see M. Castells, "The Space of Flows," in *The Rise of the Network Society*, Vol.1 of *The Information Age, Economy, Society and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp.376–428; and M. Laguerre, *The Global Ethnopolis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); and "Diasporic Globalization: Reframing the Local/Global Question," paper presented at the "Architectures of Globalization" Conference, November 9–11, 2000, organized by the Dept. of Architecture, University of California at Berkeley.
25. For the notion of "invented tradition," see E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
26. P. Rabinow, *French Modern*, p.7.
27. C. Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in the *Oeuvres Complètes*, as cited in Rabinow, *French Modern*, p.7.
28. J. Abu-Lughod, "Disappearing Dichotomies: First World — Third World; Traditional — Modern," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.3 No.2 (1992), p.9.
29. Ibid., p.11.
30. Castells, "The Space of Flows," p.411.
31. Hoang and Nishimura, *"36 Old Streets" Quarter*, p.44.
32. Templer, *Shadows and Wind*, Chapter 11; and Hoang Huu Phe and Nishimura, *"36 Old Streets" Quarter*, p. 44.
33. Templer, *Shadows and Wind*, p.231.
34. S.W. Logan, *Heritage Planning in Hanoi in the Context of the Hanoi Master Plan*, 1994, p.7
35. http://www.sinhcafevietnam.f2s.com/english_info/house-proud.html
36. P. Wakins, "Hanoi under Threat," *Architectural Review*, No.1166 (April 1994), pp.70–74.
37. A.P. Nguyen, "Good-old, Bad-old Hanoi," *VIR* (November 14–20, 1994).
38. "Owner" in Vietnam means that an individual owns the building, not the land.
39. Hoang and Nishimura, *"36 Old Streets" Quarter*, p.21.
40. See G. Azambre, "Les Origines de Hanoi," *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises*, New Series, Vol.33 No.3, 3rd trimester (1958), p.268.
41. Huong and Nishimura, *"36 Old Streets" Quarter*, p.47.
42. http://www.sinhcafevietnam.f2s.com/english_info/house-proud.html
43. Hoang and Nishimura, *"36 Old Streets" Quarter*, p.43.
44. Ibid., p.44.
45. See B. Yeoh, *Contesting Space: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment in Colonial Singapore* (Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia: Oxford University Press, Southeast Asian Publishing Unit, 1996).
46. N. AlSayyad, "Culture, Identity, and Urbanism in a Changing World: A Historical Perspective on Colonialism, Nationalism, and Globalization," in M.A. Cohen, B.A. Ruble, J.S. Tulchi, and A.M. Garland, eds., *Preparing for the Urban Future* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p.109.